

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Shawn Hilty Road Improvement
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2018
Proponent:	Shaw Hilty
Location:	T 23N R 8E S3
County:	Chouteau
Trust:	Western/ Eastern, Pine Hills School

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this easement would be for the construction of a road on an existing grade across the drainage from the existing access road. This road would have a lesser grade than the road opposite and would be primarily used for semi-trucks hauling commodities.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Proponent: Shawn Hilty
Surface Lessees: Shawn Hilty

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission to build a road.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to build a road.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Summary by Map Unit — Chouteau County Area, Montana (MT615)						
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name (percent)	Rating reasons (numeric values)	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
32C	Kobase silty clay loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Kobase (85%)		22.2	26.7%
			Lonna (5%)			
			Clay loam till substratums (5%)			
			Ethridge (3%)			
			Yamacall, calcareous (2%)			
47B	Marias silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Slight	Marias (85%)		6.9	8.3%
			Kobase (6%)			
			Ethridge (5%)			
			Poorly drained soils (1%)			
301C	Marvan-Vanda clays, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Marvan (50%)		0.8	1.0%
			Vanda (35%)			
			Benz (5%)			
			Bascovy (3%)			
974F	Neldore-Hillon complex, 25 to 70 percent slopes	Severe	Neldore (55%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)	53.3	64.0%
			Hillon (30%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)		
			Sunburst (3%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)		
Totals for Area of Interest					83.3	100.0%

Summary by Rating Value			
Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI	
Severe	53.3	64.0%	
Slight	30.0	36.0%	
Totals for Area of Interest	83.3	100.0%	

Most of the area that the road will cross will be rated as severe for off road erosion. This is because of the steep slopes and the relatively little cover that is present. Appropriate measures will need to be taken to protect the slopes and provide proper drainage. This will include culverts at the tops of the draws and features at the outfalls to prevent head cutting.

Cumulative effects to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No noxious weeds previously recorded on any tracts, but some invasive weeds are present and will need controlled.

No rare plants or cover types are present.
 No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_05773

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. The work will be done on an existing road grade across from a regularly used road. The current vegetation will be stripped and the road resurfaced but there will be no other disturbance of habitat.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Species of Concern 10 Species Filtered by the following criteria: Tourship = 0230008 (based on mapped Species Occurrences)										
MAMMALS (MAMMALIA)										1 SPECIES
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN HIT	% OF HIT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i> Black-tailed Prairie Dog	Squiridae Squirrels	G4	S3				SGCN	15%	71%	Grasslands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Fallon, Fergus, Garland, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Moore, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone										
BIRDS (AVES)										2 SPECIES
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great Blue Heron	Ardeidae Bittern / Egrets / Herons / Night-Herons	G5	S1				SGCN	3%	100%	Riparian forest
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, Moore, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Powder River, Prairie, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Rosebud, Sanders, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone										
<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> Greater Sage Grouse	Phasianidae Upland Game Birds	GG4	S2				SGCN2	17%	75%	Sagebrush
State Rank Reason: Small breeding population size, evidence of recent declines, and declining regeneration of riparian cottonwood forests due to altered hydrology and grazing. Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Madison, Moore, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Willow, Yellowstone										
REPTILES (REPTILIA)										2 SPECIES
<i>Apalone spinifer</i> Spiny Softshell	Troglodytidae Softshell Turtles	G5	S3				SGCN1	2%	24%	Prairie rivers and larger streams
<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i> Greater Short-horned Lizard	Phrynosomatidae Sagebrush / Spiny Lizards	G5	S3				SGCN1, SGIN	19%	66%	Sandy / gravelly soils
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Moore, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Willow, Yellowstone										
AMPHIBIANS (AMPHIBIA)										1 SPECIES
<i>Axolotus cognatus</i> Great Plains Toad	Bufoidea True Toads	G5	S2				SGCN2	8%	62%	Wetlands, floodplain pools
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Garland, Golden Valley, Hill, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Moore, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone										
FISH (ACTINOPTERYGII)										4 SPECIES
<i>Cyprinotus elongatus</i> Blue Sucker	Cyprinotidae Suckers	GG4	SS3				SGCN2	1%	7%	Large prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Garland, Hill, Liberty, Moore, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland State Rank Reason: The Blue Sucker is currently listed as an "S2S" species of concern in Montana because they are potentially at risk of extirpation in the state, because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.										
<i>Macrhybopsis gelida</i> Sturgeon Chub	Cyprinidae Minnow	G1	SS3				SGCN2	3%	7%	Large prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Moore, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland State Rank Reason: The Sturgeon Chub is currently listed as an "S2S" species of concern in Montana because they are potentially at risk of extirpation in the state, because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. Population losses from the Fort Peck section of the Missouri River and the Sturgeon River are likely permanent, but recent losses from the Powder River basin are being reversed through restoration (Sturgeon 2014).										
<i>Sander canadensis</i> Sauger	Perccidae Perches	G5	S2				SGCN2	1%	15%	Large prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Hill, Liberty, Moore, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland State Rank Reason: The Sauger is currently listed as an "S2" species of concern in Montana because they are at risk of extirpation in the state, because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. Population losses from the reservoir sections of the Missouri River and the Sturgeon River are likely permanent. Competition and hybridization from the introduced walleye is another threat to native sauger populations.										
<i>Scaphirhynchus obtus</i> Pallid Sturgeon	Acipenseridae Sturgeons	G1	S1				SGCN	10%	1%	Large prairie rivers
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Garland, Moore, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland State Rank Reason: The Pallid Sturgeon is currently listed as "S1" in MT due to extremely limited and/or rapidly declining population numbers, range and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extirpation or extirpation in the state. The pallid sturgeon is one of the rarest fish in North America and was federally listed as endangered in 1998. The Pallid Sturgeon has been declining during at least the past 50 years with only about 300 adults remaining in the upper Missouri River and limited natural reproduction.										

The Missouri river does not flow through this tract so the fish that were present on the SOC report will not be affected by the project. There have been no prairie dogs observed on the tract. Since the disturbance will be in the uplands the spiny softshell, great plains toad and Great Blue Heron are not likely to be affected. The two species present on the report that may be affected are the Greater Short Horned lizard and the sage grouse. The disturbance that may affect these two will be temporary and will not be disturbing any area that has not already been disturbed in the past.

Temporary displacement may occur No population effect is anticipated.

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that *Antiquities* have not been identified in the APE. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

No effects on historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources anticipated.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There is also a land use license for the same road present on the adjacent tract.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

This project will allow the safe and effective transportation of agricultural products to market.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project will not create any new jobs. The proponent will be doing the work.

No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Heavy truck traffic will be directed to this road instead of the adjacent road up the hill and then would return to the existing road. This will not have an impact on any demand for government services.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The proposed project will not have any cumulative economic or social effect.

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to build and use a road.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Dustin Lenz
	Title: Land Use Specialist
Signature:	Date:

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Barny D. Smith
	Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature:	Date: